

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 8, 10-18, 20-24, and 35-41 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 24, 35, and 38 are amended. Support for the amendment to Claims 1 and 24 can be found in the specification as published at least at paragraph [0129] and in Figure 17, for example. Support for the amendment to Claim 35 can be found in Claims 1 and 21, inasmuch as Claim 35 is placed in independent form. Support for the amendment to Claim 38 can be found in Claims 1, 22, and 37, inasmuch as Claim 38 is placed in independent form. Thus, no new matter is added.

The outstanding Office Action rejected Claims 1-5, 8, 10-18, 20-24, and 35-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite; rejected Claims 1, 3-4, 8, 12-14, 17-18, 20-24, 37, and 39-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Harston et al. (WO 99/22858) in view of Christel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,368,871, herein "Christel") and Turner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,306,658, herein "Turner"); and rejected Claims 2, 5, 10-11, and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Harston, Christel, and Turner, and further in view of Young et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0226806, herein "Young").

Claims 35-36 and 38 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, Claims 35 and 38 are rewritten in independent form.

In response to the inquiry regarding which Abstract is the correct Abstract, Applicants indicate that the Abstract filed December 5, 2006, is the correct Abstract. A copy of the Abstract filed December 5, 2006, is resubmitted for the Examiner's convenience.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-5, 8, 10-18, 20-24, and 35-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite, Claims 1 and 24 are amended to address the noted

informalities. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of Claims 1-5, 8, 10-18, 20-24, and 35-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 1, 3-4, 8, 12-14, 17-18, 20-24, 37, and 39-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Harston in view of Christel and Turner.

Amended independent Claims 1 and 24, recite, in part:

wherein a thermal barrier is disposed between the confluent portion and the branch portion.

Thus, the fine channel device includes a thermal barrier that is disposed between the confluent portion and the branch portion.

Turning now to the cited art, Harston describes an apparatus for reacting an aromatic compound with a reacting agent. However, Harston is silent regarding a thermal barrier, much less a thermal barrier that is disposed between a confluent portion and a branch portion.

Christel fails to remedy the deficiencies discussed above regarding Harston in relation to amended independent Claims 1 and 24. Instead, Christel is silent regarding a thermal barrier, much less a thermal barrier that is disposed between a confluent portion and a branch portion.

Turner fails to remedy the deficiencies discussed above regarding Harston and Christel in relation to amended independent Claims 1 and 24. Instead, Turner is silent regarding a thermal barrier, much less a thermal barrier that is disposed between a confluent portion and a branch portion.

Accordingly, no reasonable combination of Harston, Christel, and Turner would include all of the features recited in amended independent Claims 1 and 24, or claims depending therefrom. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of Claims 1, 3-4, 8, 12-14, 17-18, 20-24, 37, and 39-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

In addition, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 2, 5, 10-11, and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Harston in view of Christel and Turner and further in view of Young.

As discussed above, no reasonable combination of Harston, Christel, and Turner would include all of the features recited in independent Claim 1.

Young fails to remedy the deficiencies discussed above regarding Harston, Christel, and Turner in relation to amended independent Claim 1. Instead, Young is silent regarding a thermal barrier, much less a thermal barrier that is disposed between a confluent portion and a branch portion.

Accordingly, no reasonable combination of Harston, Christel, Turner, and Young would include all of the features recited in amended independent Claim 1, or claims depending therefrom. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of Claims 2, 5, 10-11, and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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